

# Talking with Partners about Prevention

Grades 9-12, Lesson 13

## Student Learning Objectives

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The student will be able to ...

1. demonstrate assertive communication with a partner about abstinence, STD testing, condoms, and other contraception.

## Agenda

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1. Introduce lesson.
2. Read the *Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout* and discuss communication skills.
3. Recommended: Show and discuss film (15 min), "*Just Like You Imagined?*"
4. Plan role play skits using *Our Own Scenarios*.
5. Facilitate students' acting out skits.
6. Debrief and summarize the learning activities.
7. Assign homework.

This lesson was most recently edited on January 20, 2011.

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**Materials Needed**

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**Student Materials**

- **Assertiveness Handout** from Lesson 9: Abstinence (one copy per student)
- **Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout** (one copy per student)
- **Individual Homework: Blogging about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs** (one copy per student)
- **Family Homework: Talking about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs** (one copy per student) Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at [www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH) – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

**Classroom Materials**

- If viewing the DVD:
  - DVD entitled **Just Like You Imagined?** or access to the Scenariosusa.org website
  - DVD player or computer, screen, projector
- **Role Play Scenarios Activity** photocopied and cut into strips. Make 2 or 3 sets if you have more than 26 students in your class (1 scenario per pair of students)
- **Assertiveness Handout** from Lesson 9: Abstinence

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**Teacher Preparation**

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**Well in advance ...**

- If you plan to purchase the DVD **Just Like You Imagined?** from Scenarios USA go to: <http://scenariosusa.org/>. Note: you will need to do this early enough to allow for shipping and handling. Allow at least 4-6 weeks. The video costs \$89.00. It can also be streamed from the Scenariosusa.org website.
- If you plan to stream the film, **check that you are able to access the URL** (listed above) from your classroom computer. If not, consult with your school district’s IT staff about unblocking it and/or problem-solving how you can show it. You may need to confirm that your district did approve the film as a part of adopting the **FLASH** curriculum.

**The day before the lesson ...**

- **Talk to two mature students** in your class about a role play you would like them to model in activity 4. Plan role play skits using provided scenarios.
- **Make copies** of Materials Needed (see above).

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**Standards**

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**National Health Education Standard:**

- **Standard 4:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
  - **4.12.1** Use skills for communicating effectively with family, peers, and others to enhance health.

**4.12.2** Demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.

**4.12.3** Demonstrate strategies to prevent, manage, or resolve interpersonal conflicts without harming self or others.

**Washington State Health Education Standard:**

- **Essential Academic Learning Requirement (EALR) 2:** The student acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a healthy life: Recognizes dimensions of health, recognizes stages of growth and development, reduces health risks, and lives safely.

**Component 2.2:** Understands stages of growth and development.

**Grade Level Expectations (GLE) 2.2.2** Understands how to maintain sexual health throughout life.

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**Activities**

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**NOTE:** Instructions to you are in regular font. A suggested script is in *italics*. Feel free to modify the script to your style and your students' needs.

**1. Introduce lesson.**

*So far in this unit, we have learned that it is important to know how your body works, what behaviors prevent pregnancy and STDs, what our values are about having sex, and how to recognize that a relationship is unhealthy. It is also important to know how to communicate all of these things with a partner.*

*You may be in a relationship now, may have had one in the past you can reflect on, or this may help you with a future partner. Our focus today will be communicating with partners about preventing pregnancy and STDs. Our goal is for you to feel confident in talking about risk behaviors, and how to avoid those risks, or reduce them, by using condoms, birth control, and getting tested for STDs. Even if you are currently abstinent, these skills will help you in future relationships if and when you decide to have sex.*

*Think back to the YouTube videos that we created during our Abstinence lesson. Think about the refusal and assertiveness skills we learned about. During that lesson, we incorporated different skills to tell a partner that you do not want to have sex. This lesson focuses on what to say after you have decided to have sex, and how to keep yourself safe.*

**2. Read *Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout* and discuss communication skills.**

Ask students to pull out their *Assertiveness Handout* from Lesson 9. Ask them to silently read the *Handout* as a refresher.

Remind them that assertiveness skills are valuable not only for refusing sex. They are also important when negotiating condom use or getting tested for an STD. Pass out copies of the *Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout*.

Ask four student volunteers to read each of the four sections aloud. Discuss any points which are not clear.

**3. Recommended: Show and discuss the (15 min) film, “*Just Like You Imagined?*”**

If you are able to purchase or stream this film, we recommend it. If you are unable to, or if the content of the film is not appropriate for your school, the objectives of this lesson can still be met by utilizing the remaining activities. If you choose not to use the film, simply allow more time for the student skits.

Introduce the DVD *Just Like You Imagined?* The film was written by teens and professionally produced. It shares the stories of six teens struggling with pregnancy, STDs, and communicating with partners. Because of somewhat sophisticated content, in particular a young gay couple deciding if they want to date, remind students of ground rules.

*The classroom should be a safe space for everyone. After the video, there will be discussion and some role plays. Keep our ground rules in mind for the entire lesson. Be respectful of others, even if your views differ from theirs.*

After the video, use the following questions to guide the discussion in a large group.

- a. *Erica is angry with Matt because she thinks he knew that he could be HIV positive, but never told her.*

- *What is important for people to discuss prior to engaging in a sexual relationship?*
- *What other things should a couple do before having sex?*

Point out the importance of discussing past risky behaviors as well as each person's expectations. Also note how a couple might benefit from getting tested together before having sex, or delaying sex until they are comfortable enough with each other to talk about it. Reinforce that condoms are the only contraceptive we know that will reduce the risk of STDs.

- b. *Enrique seems to want to move faster than Gary.*

- *How can they come to an agreement about how they should proceed with their relationship?*

Acknowledge that they may or may not share similar perspectives and, therefore, must make a decision about whether it is best for them to continue their relationship, and whether or not the relationship will involve sexual activity.

- c. *When Kristie approaches Willy to tell him that she is pregnant he says, "It's not my problem. You're on your own."*

- *How familiar does this situation seem? Are all teen dads like this?*
- *What should each person's role be under these circumstances?*

Discuss the responsibilities regarding sex and pregnancy that both men and women should share.

Make sure to also mention one mistake in the film. When Enrique asks Gary if the client at the clinic has AIDS, Gary says yes, he does. It is important for students to know that no one at a clinic, even a volunteer, can share that kind of information with others. Someone's HIV status is private health information and cannot be shared without their permission

NOTE: These questions are adapted from the lesson plan provided by Scenarios USA for the video *Just Like You Imagined?* Available at:

[http://www.scenariosusa.org/watchfilms/films/2006/08/just\\_like\\_you\\_imagined.html](http://www.scenariosusa.org/watchfilms/films/2006/08/just_like_you_imagined.html).

#### **4. Plan role play skits using *Our Own Scenarios*.**

Explain that students, in pairs or triads, are going to use a scenario given to them to create a short skit that they may get to act out in front of the class. They should read the scenario and assume the roles of the people in the skit (if three people, one can be a friend). Explain that they have 5 minutes to plan out the skit, including any dialogue or gathering / making props. Props do not have to be elaborate. They should refer to their *Assertiveness Handout* and *Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout* while planning their skit and try to incorporate at least three concepts from them. Stress that situations represent

a range of people of all ages, ethnicities and sexual orientations. Even if they do not agree with a scenario, they should try to plan it out. No one will be forced to act out their scenario if they feel uncomfortable.

Ask for two students, who you think are mature, to help you act out a situation as an example. Preferably, you would have talked with these students yesterday so they know what is coming and have read the example ahead of time.

Example: High school sweethearts Suzie and Mahir are at a house party. They have been talking about having sex for several months now, but never done it. They both decide to go to an empty bedroom in the house. They both agree to have sex, but it is Mahir's first time. Suzie has to teach Mahir the proper way to put on a condom. Mahir is nervous.

Hand out one *Role Play Scenario* slip of paper to each pair or triad. Remind them of their time limit to plan. Tell students each skit should last about 2 minutes.

### **5. Act out skits in front of the class.**

If time is short, try to ensure that skits # 1-6 are acted out. If you can't access the film, you should have time for all 13 role plays. After each group acts out its skit, ask the following questions.

- How did the couple solve their problem?
- What communication or assertiveness skills did they use?
- What could they have done differently or better?

### **6. Conclude the lesson.**

*In any partnership, be it straight or gay, both partners have the right and the responsibility to protect their own health and the health of their partner. Communicating effectively is part of that. But remember that about 60% of high school students are choosing not to have sex at all<sup>1</sup>, so if you fall in that category, keep these skills in your repertoire for when you do decide to have sex for the first time and from that point forward.*

### **7. Assign homework.**

*Some people find it difficult to talk about sex, birth control, and STDs, but practice helps. Like any other skill, communicating about sensitive, personal matters takes practice and people with more experience communicating tend to be better at it. I want to encourage you to practice by talking to friends and family so you're clear what your values, feelings, and limits are related to sexual activity. Tonight's Family Homework is the last one in the unit (unless you are continuing the unit, using enrichment lessons). I hope if you haven't done any others, you'll do this one. But, as always, we do have an Individual Homework alternative for those who really can't or feel strongly that they don't want to.*

- Individual Homework: Blogging about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs*
- Family Homework: Talking about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs*

Reminder: The English version is on the last page of this lesson plan. You will find the *Family Homework* in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Vietnamese and Arabic at [www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/FLASH) – click on “Parents & Guardians.”

# Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout

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## Before talking to a partner:

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### Think about your approach

- **Plan what to say.** Make a list of pros and cons. Think about what you need for yourself and from your partner.



- **Be ready to listen:** Stop texting, talking, and other activities. Really hear what your partner has to say.
- **Share your decision with friends and family:** Practicing or rehearsing helps you figure what you want to say and how others may interpret it.

## How to begin:

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### Think about your timing and intent

- **Choose a good time:** Be sure it is BEFORE you have sex, not during or after.
- **Choose a good place:** Limit distractions and interruptions. A party is probably not the best place.
- **Say what you value about your partner:** This way you can say yes to the relationship even if you say no to sex without condoms or birth control.





*Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout, continued*

## What to talk about:

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### Make sure you are being clear

- **Be honest:** If you think you should both get tested for STDs before having sex, say so. Do not let embarrassment stand in the way of your health!
- **Share reasons for using condoms and / or birth control:** Think ahead what your values, feelings, and goals are. How would having sex without protection harm any of these?
- **Plan ways to spend time together that don't involve unprotected sex:** Agree with your partner on things you can do to avoid STDs and pregnancy like getting tested or using condoms and other forms of birth control.
- **Ask your partner for support:** Stress that mutual care means taking care of the health of both people.



## Be aware of:

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### Think about body language and the tone and volume of your voice

- **Communication styles of your partner:** Males and females have different anatomy, different levels of hormones, and different ways of being socialized to interact with others. Be aware that males and females may think different things in their heads when they say the same words. However, even in same sex partnerships, there may still be very different communication styles between the two people even though they share gender. And obviously, every individual is different, so do not stereotype that “all guys” or “all girls” act a certain way.
- **Culture and family upbringing:** The way we communicate has a lot to do with the home we grew up in, the role models we had when learning to talk, and the culture we are surrounded by. If you are dating across cultures, try to notice any different communication styles when your partner interacts with other people. Talk about it!



Parts of this handout were adapted from Stang, et al. (2004). *Health Facts: Reproductive Health & Pregnancy Prevention*.

# Our Own Scenarios

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1. Michael and Jose have been a couple for over two years. They are very religious, they love each other, and they have decided to wait to have sex until they can marry. Michael had a friend of the family who died of AIDS. And Jose's cousin has been in and out of the STD clinic over the past few years. They both want to wait to have sex until they are truly committed to each other, because they worry about STDs. But they are growing impatient.



2. Soonyee and Jin are a couple in college. They are having sex already and use condoms so they don't get pregnant or give one another STDs. Jin is getting nervous about using only condoms because one slipped off last time they had sex after he had been drinking. He wants to stop having sex until Soonyee starts using another birth control method. Soonyee is adamant that she does not want any extra hormones in her body.



3. Margarita and Roberto have been a couple for 6 months. Margarita is 16 and in high school. Roberto is 20 and in college. They've decided they want to start having sex. They live in a state where it is legal for a 16-year-old and a 20-year-old to have sex. Both have gone to the clinic and neither has any of the STDs they were tested for. Roberto is insisting that the only method they need to use is withdrawal. Margarita wants something better, more effective, and that she can control. Margarita sometimes feels like Roberto tries to control what she does.



4. Madison and Brad are engaged to be married and in their mid-twenties. Neither of them has ever done any drugs and they only drink occasionally. They are both sure that they're faithful to each other. They were high school sweethearts and neither of them has ever had other partners. Brad wants to stop using condoms, because he feels there is no risk of STDs. Madison has heard bad stories from her friend who is on birth control pills. Brad thinks Madison should start the IUD or implant, because neither of them want children for the next 4-5 years but eventually they do want to become parents.

5. Cole and Mayra have been married for 10 years. They have two children and have decided they do not want to have any more. Mayra wants Cole to get a vasectomy because it's cheaper and the recovery time is less than a tubal ligation. She's tired of always being responsible for birth control, because she was on birth control the entire time they have known each other, except when they tried to have children.



6. Lisa and Wanda have been dating for about 8 months. They met in 11<sup>th</sup> grade English class, where Wanda started sending poems to Lisa. They don't know any other lesbians in school or in their families. Wanda heard a health educator say something in their health class about dental dams and how they can stop the spread of STDs during oral sex. Lisa had 2 male partners before she met Wanda. Sometimes she still hooks up with one of those guys. Wanda wants to suggest they use dental dams for oral sex but doesn't know how to go about it.



7. Jerome and Lashanda are dating and have known each other for about 5 months. Jerome has HIV, and he has told Lashanda about his HIV status. They are both interested in having sex eventually, but Lashanda wants to remain HIV negative. She is willing to use condoms, but she is scared that something may go wrong. Jerome talked to his doctor at the HIV clinic about how he can avoid giving his partner HIV.



8. Sarah and Avi have been dating for a month after meeting each other at a work party. They started having sex soon after they became a couple, and decided not to see other people. In the beginning, Sarah said she was on the pill, so they didn't have to worry about her getting pregnant. Aaron knows that Sarah can be a little forgetful; in fact, she forgot to bring her pills when they went skiing for a weekend. He wants to start using condoms, but is worried she will think he is cheating if he suggests them. He is not interested in hooking up with other women.

9. Chris and Robyn have been a couple for three years and have a very healthy sex life. They always use condoms because Chris has a history of genital herpes, and Robyn has the implant for birth control. They both decide they want to try anal sex, because they are curious. After a romantic dinner at home, Robyn realizes there is no lube in the apartment. Chris suggests they use olive oil with the condom. Robyn knows that oil can cause condoms to break.



10. Alyssa and Travis know each other from the track team in their high school. Alyssa has had a crush on Travis for a long time and was very excited when he asked her out on a date. On their 6<sup>th</sup> date, Travis brings up the idea of oral sex. Alyssa agrees but only if he will wear a condom. Travis thinks that's ridiculous and not necessary. Alyssa knows a friend who got chlamydia in her throat and refuses to let that happen to her. She brings up the idea of flavored condoms she picked up at the local clinic.



11. Miguel and Bianca just came back from their amazing honeymoon in Hawaii. They have talked a lot about their future together. Miguel wants to go to graduate school for computer engineering. Bianca is a captain in the Army. They are very interested in having two kids after grad school and Bianca's current tour of duty. They also want there to be about three years between their kids, because they both have older siblings who are three years older and think it's a good age difference. They are talking about all the options they have for birth control.



12. Xavier and Brandi are seniors in high school. They have been dating since the end of sophomore year. They started having sex the summer after junior year. Brandi gets the Depo shot every three months so she doesn't get pregnant. But recently she has been noticing that she is gaining weight, even though she works out all the time for softball and volleyball. She wants to have a conversation with Xavier about changing methods but is embarrassed to tell him the reason why.



13. Cynthia and Sam have been best friends since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. They are hanging out at Sam's house while his parents are away for the evening. While watching a movie, they start cuddling, as they normally do, but this time they start kissing. He asks her if this is ok because they have been friends so long. She says yes. They quickly move to having sex. Without even thinking about it, they both realize afterwards that they did not use any protection. Cynthia starts freaking out. Sam brings up emergency contraception (EC) because he heard that their friend, Mandy, had to use it last month.

# Individual Homework: Blogging about Preventing Pregnancy and STDs

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NAME

DATE

CLASS PERIOD

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FOR FULL CREDIT, THIS EXERCISE IS DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Imagine you write a very popular blog that answers questions other teens send to you about trouble with relationships and questions about sex, birth control, and STDs. You should use the communication skills found on the two handouts we used in class today: *Assertiveness Handout* from Lesson 2: Abstinence and *Talking to Partners about Sex, STDs, and Birth Control Handout* when you answer the question.

**Alternative:** you can make a video where you read the questions and then answer them verbally. Bring it in or post it to YouTube for credit.

URL: \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 1:** Hi, I am a 16 year old girl. My boyfriend and I are talking about having sex for the first time. He doesn't think I need birth control because we are both virgins. I don't want to scare him away because I really love him, but I don't want to get pregnant! I have things I want to do before I have kids. What should I tell him?

Sincerely,  
Got Plans

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**Situation 2:** Uh, this is pretty embarrassing, but I'm on the football team and my teammate and I recently realized that we like each other. Like really like each other. We are pretty excited but also scared and nervous other people will find out. We have no idea who to talk to about sex, how to get condoms, and all that stuff. I know the

pharmacist at the local drug store so I can't get them there. Both of us have messed around with other guys before. My buddy doesn't think we need them, but I think we do. Help!

Sincerely,  
Helmet N Cleats

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**Situation 3:** I feel really stuck. My girlfriend wants to stop using condoms because she is using the patch. I've known her for a long time, but I am not sure if we are ready to be exclusive with each other. I did hook up with this other girl at a party last week... anyway! That was a mistake, and I want to stay with my girlfriend. I want to insist we keep using condoms but am afraid she will think I suspect she is sleeping around or she will suspect that I am sleeping around. What do I say to her???

Sincerely,  
Patched Jeans

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# Family Homework: Talking about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs

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**All Family Homework is optional. You may complete an Individual Homework assignment instead.**

**PURPOSE:** This is a chance to share with one another some of your own (and your family's, your religion's) beliefs about sexuality and relationships. It will also give you a chance to get to know one another a little better.

**DIRECTIONS:** Find a quiet place where the two of you – the student and the trusted adult (parent, guardian, stepparent, adult friend of the family, best friend's parent, etc.) – can talk privately. Set aside about 10 minutes. During this time, please give full attention to one another ... no texting, watching TV and so on.

**ASK THE STUDENT:** What are your life goals at this time? Career, family, travel? What would a pregnancy or STD do to change those goals?

**ASK THE ADULT:** How do you communicate with your boss at work when you want or need something? Can you think of an example? How do you communicate with your partner (present or past) when you want or need something? Got an example?

**ASK THE STUDENT:** How would you say "no" if your partner wanted to have sex but you didn't want to? How would you talk about birth control and condoms with a partner?

**ASK THE ADULT:** What do you think I could say to my partner about preventing pregnancy or disease, if I got into a relationship and we decided to have sex? What if my partner said he or she didn't want to use birth control or condoms?



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## Family Homework: Talking about Preventing Pregnancy & STDs – Confirmation Slip

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**FOR FULL CREDIT, THIS HOMEWORK IS DUE:** \_\_\_\_\_

We have completed this Homework Exercise.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
student's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature of family member or trusted adult

**REFERENCES:**

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (July 9, 2010). *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 59 (26), 797-836.